

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 AID-20 IGA-02 EB-11 RSC-01

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FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9261

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : EAID GV

SUBJECT : AIR ALASKA LOAN - GUINEAN REACTION TO PROPOSED
SOLUTION FOR DISPOSAL OF HULKS

REF: STATE 218938

1. APPRECIATE EFFORTS SOLVE PROBLEM PRESENTED BY GUINEAN REQUEST TO MAKE EFFECTIVE USE OF DISINTEGRATING AIR ALASKA HULKS. GUINEANS WERE SURPRISED AND DISAPPOINTED AF/W DESK OFFICER WYGANT DID NOT BRING PERMISSION FOR THEM TO TAKE HULKS.

2. WHEN EMBOFF PRESENTED PROPOSED SOLUTION TO CHEF DE CABINET AT MINISTER EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CAMARA, LATTER CONSULTED MINISTER WHO ASKED EMBOFF SUBMIT NOTE. PROBLEM IS GUINEANS SIMPLY DO NOT UNDERSTAND NOW ANYMORE THAN THEY HAVE IN PAST HOW US CAN BE BUREAUCRATIC ON WHAT IS IN CONTEXT US-GUINEAN RELATIONS A MATTER OF GOOD FAITH. CHEF DE CABINET COMPARED SALE OF UNFLYABLE AIRPLANES TO SALE OF AUTOMOBILE THAT TURNED OUT TO BE A LEMON AND CONCLUDED THAT HONEST DEALER WOULD EITHER EXCHANGE CAR OR REFUND MONEY. (TO ANSWER THAT REACTION WOULD DEPEND ON LEGALISTIC INTERPRETATION OF CONTRACT WOULD BE TO ASSERT THAT LEGALISMS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN GOOD FAITH IN THIS TRANSACTION.) THEREFORE, CAMARA CONCLUDED, IT DIFFICULT FOR GUINEANS TO UNDERSTAND HOW GOG CAN NOW BE ASKED TO REMIT MORE MONEY IN PAYMENT FOR HULKS WHEN THEY HAVE ALREADY PAID

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OVER \$500,000 FOR AIRPLANES THAT COULD NOT FLY.

3. EMBOFF PATIENTLY EXPLAINED THAT IF EXPENSES INVOLVED IN DISMANTLING AND SHIPPING WERE GREATER THAN VALUE OF HULKS, OBVIOUSLY NO MONEY WOULD BE OWING. EMBASSY NOW PREPARING NOTE FOR TRANSMISSION TO FOREIGN OFFICE PRESENTING SOLUTION SUGGESTED REFTEL.

4. I AM WELL AWARE OF STRONG POSITION ON AIR ALASKA LOAN TAKEN BY MY PREDECESSORS AND FULLY ASSOCIATE MYSELF WITH THEIR REQUESTS THAT IN OUR OWN INTEREST WE RESCUE GOOD NAME OF USG FROM THIS DEBACLE. WHEN I MET WITH PRESIDENT NOV 3, HE AND PRIME MINISTER RAISED SUBJECT AND POLITELY BUT PRECISELY OUTLINED HOW GUINEA HAD BEEN TAKEN ON THIS ONE. PRESIDENT COMMENTED THAT HE THOUGHT USG WOULD BE AS CONCERNED AS GUINEA TO HAVE THE HULKS REMOVED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

5. LEGAL SOLUTION SUGGESTED REFTEL IS HIGHLY COMMENDABLE EFFORT AND ONE WE WILL DO OUR BEST TO PERSUADE GUINEANS TO ACCEPT. SEEMS TO ME, HOWEVER, THAT BY AVOIDING MORAL RESPONSIBILITY ON THIS ISSUE, WE ARE DAMAGING OUR FUTURE RELATIONS WITH GUINEA. PLANES ARE STILL AT THE AIRPORT AND CAN BE SEEN BY ANYONE LEAVING OR ARRIVING BY AIR AND ARE HARDLY A GOOD ADVERTISEMENT FOR USG AS HAS BEEN POINTED OUT SO OFTEN OVER PAST YEARS. THEREFORE, I SUGGEST THAT WE IMMEDIATELY AUTHORIZE GUINEA TO TAKE THE HULKS AND DISPOSE OF THEM. AT SAME TIME WE SHOULD TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO WRITE OFF DEBT. ALTERNATIVE IS FOR US TO REFUND WHATEVER PAYMENTS GUINEA HAS ALREADY MADE AND MAKE PROMPT ARRANGEMENTS FOR USG REMOVAL OF THE HULKS. WOULD APPRECIATE EARLIEST POSSIBLE REPLY AS PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER ALMOST CERTAIN TO RAISE IT WITH ME AT NEXT MEETING.

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